



BARCELONA RESTAURANT REVIEWS

DISFRUTAR (2017)

APRIL 21, 2017



Now in its third year and with a Michelin star, Disfrutar is still the most exciting restaurant in Barcelona.

Review: Disfrutar restaurant, Eixample, Barcelona

When I visited Disfrutar in 2015, I was blown away. I raved about it in my review [here](#). I've since sent dozens of people there and heard only good reports in return.

But some things have changed. The restaurant deservedly won a Michelin star. Many believed it should have won two. Disfrutar was once the bargain of the fine-dining scene but its growing popularity has inflated the prices. Would I be as impressed with a second visit to the restaurant? Or would fame have fouled the Disfrutar formula?

Who am I kidding? Let's not try to build tension for cheap effect. Disfrutar is still fantastic.

Knowing that I'd been before, the chefs prepared a slightly different tasting menu for me than for my dining companion. I'd be lying if I said that all of the new creations were as successful as the classic dishes, but they were close enough.

I won't wax lyrical about everything I ate. It would take too long. Re-read the previous review, but adjust for the new prices. The Classic tasting menu (20 courses) is now €110. The Gran Classic (26 courses) is €150. There are also two Festival menus at the same prices consisting of Disfrutar's latest creations. The full, don't-eat-for-a-week-afterwards, 31-course, belly-bursting Disfrutar menu we ate costs €180, plus wine. Is it worth it? Yes it is.

With so many courses, some misses among the hits are inevitable. The 'smoked cider', created with much ceremony using dry ice carbonation, tastes of weak, chilled apple juice. The deconstructed ceviche is fine, but does the world really need yet another ceviche? The dining world is overrun with the damn things at the moment and I'd like to see a little more conceptual creativity from Disfrutar. There is zero chance they'll still be serving this in 5 years when the fad has passed. A chilled hare and tarragon consommé, served as part of the Gran Festival's additional dishes isn't entirely convincing either.

The rest is spectacular.

There are the usual theatrics, with dry ice and table-side blowtorches aplenty, and dishes being created in stages over time. Almost everything looks amazing but the best dish of the menu is by far the ugliest: 'black cauliflower' with coconut bûchamel and lime. The fermented cauliflower is a spectacular triumph of balance; an explosion of umami controlled by careful contrasts.



The fried egg "laid by a hen called truffle" isn't pretty either but what the truffle-infused yolk and perfectly crisped white lack in looks they make up for in personality.



Salted razor clams and seaweed.



Marinated tuna with raspberries and sake-kasu.



A rich bowl of sea-cucumber noodles.



Multi-spherified corn cob.



A triumphant Mexican-style squab pibil.



Conclusion:

Disfrutar is still the most fun and exuberant restaurant in Barcelona. Its tasting menus are processions of marvels. The missteps are few and the high points linger long in the memory. Service is competent and the wine pairings well chosen. It's not perfect: prices have crept up and there's a case for offering a much shorter menu. Not everyone could, or would want to, eat a minimum of 20 courses. Disfrutar remains, however, as its name suggests, a very enjoyable place to dine. If you're a first-time visitor, choose the

Classic or Gran Classic menus. Their star dishes are genuinely unmissable. If you've been before, go again. The Festival menus, while not quite so stellar, amply reward returning customers.

Disfrutar: Carrer de Villarroel 163, 08036 (Eixample Esquerra), Barcelona; Tel. (+34) 93 348 6896; www.disfrutarbarcelona.com; Metro Hospital Clinic (L5); Closed Mondays.

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1 COMMENT



MAD DOG

April 21, 2017 at 7:24 pm

The tuna and the corn look quite astonishing.

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